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ABSTRACT

More than 200 publications regarding Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP) from the past 25 years, excluding work on English for Specific Purposes, are compiled in this literature review. In introductory comments that precede the bibliography, it is noted that most of the activity in this field has occurred in the last decade, with eight professional journals (six American, one French, and one Canadian) having published the majority of research. The work reviewed in this paper falls into seven categories, each of which is discussed briefly: vocabularies and glossaries, career education, curriculum development, integration of language and culture, the proficiency movement, methods and materials, and discourse analysis. (LB)

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THE RESEARCH BASE IN LANGUAGES FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

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Over two hundred publications in LSP from the past twenty-five years are included in this review (which excludes work done in English for Specific Purposes). Most of the activity has occurred in the last decade, not unexpectedly coinciding with growing interest in the field. Eight professional journals (six American, one French, and one Canadian) have published the majority of research (one hundred and thirty-four articles) on LSP-related subjects. These periodicals are (with number of LSP articles in parentheses): ADFL Bulletin (44), Foreign Language Annals (25), Die Unterrichtspraxis (14), The French Review (13), The Modern Language Journal (13), Francais dans le monde (11), Hispania (9), and The Canadian Modern Language Review (5). Hundreds of additional papers, most from the 1982-90 Proceedings of the Annual Eastern Michigan University Conference on Languages for World

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Business and the Professions, are available through the ERIC Microfiche Collection.

The work reviewed here falls into seven categories: vocabularies and glossaries, career education, curriculum development, integration of language and culture, the proficiency movement, methods and materials, and discourse analysis. Many of the articles covered are predominantly descriptive rather than analytical, a tendency which reflects the relative youth of the field, and the widespread search for LSP course and program models.

LSP literature is centuries old, dating back to the ancient travel guides, dictionaries of medical and maritime terms, nautical and military glossaries. In the 1920s in Great Britain, H. E. Palmer believed that the design of a language course had to be grounded in the needs of the learner, which to this day remains a basis for LSP curriculum design.

In the first half of this century LSP was found in two major parts of the foreign language curriculum: 1) commercial Spanish and French courses; and 2) reading courses in French and German for psychologists, scientists, engineers, mathematicians, and physicians among others. The

business language courses primarily covered specialized terminology and correspondence. Since many graduate programs in science, engineering, and medicine required a reading knowledge of a foreign language, language departments occasionally offered courses that were geared toward specific majors (Scientific German, for example).

In the early sixties, the sparse literature of LSP focused on languages for science and technology. For example, Barber's work analysed the structural nature of scientific prose. Swales (188) attributes the start of the LSP movement to this work of Barber. The textbook writer, A.J. Herbert noted the special problems associated with language for science and the expression of technical facts and ideas.

Vocabularies and glossaries. Various vocabularies and glossaries for specific purposes were issued in the sixties by government agencies such as the Peace Corps: e.g. Health Vocabulary: Guide for Translation into the language Chinyanja of the Host Country Malawi; A Glossary of Agricultural Terms. English-French, French-English and others. Such work continued throughout the seventies in articles like those

on how to produce basic vocabularies in German for natural science and technology (113), the need for dictionaries for scientific Spanish (2), the identification of word stems in Scientific Russian (93), and special purposes dictionaries in Spanish (29).

Career Education. In the seventies career education became popular in the US public school system, coinciding with the surge of interest in foreign language study for communicative purposes. In 1974 Lester & Tamarkin described the relationship of foreign language study to the career education movement, while Steiner wrote about its national implications. Honig and Brod's work that same year provided a firm basis for subsequent development of the field. Three years later the National Institute of Education sponsored the development of an annotated bibliography entitled Foreign Language Instruction and Career Preparation (210). Other publications described techniques for individualized materials development for a career Spanish course (152), career materials for German (128), the world of work (7; 19; 142), ways to blend career education concepts with the foreign

language curriculum,[1] and appropriate teaching methods for career-oriented foreign language courses (139). For the most part these works took the form of "how to" guides.

Curriculum Development. During the last two decades, the field of LSP has reflected major trends in second language education such as a curriculum based on learner's needs and purposes in using a language, the use of culturally and linguistically rich authentic materials to provide relevant and interesting input in a content area, and the integration of language, cultural, and content instruction. Three aspects of curriculum development receive the most extensive treatment in the LSP literature: course and program design, needs assessment, and interdisciplinary cooperation. As foreign language departments added new LSP courses to their programs, an interest in curricular models flourished. As a result, case histories and reports on the development and implementation of LSP courses and programs proliferated. Consequently, over fifty papers on courses in the following languages for specific purposes were published: French (twenty-four since 1976), German (eighteen since

1974), and Spanish (fourteen since 1976).[2]

With respect to model programs, a number of articles treat the rationale, design and implementation of LSP programs: e.g., the language and international trade program at Eastern Michigan University (171-72), the Masters in International Business Studies (MIBS) program at the University of South Carolina (74; 111-12; 185) foreign languages and international studies in Colorado (154), international education for engineers at Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (207), a cooperative program between business and institutions of higher education in Virginia (151), the business language program at Rhode Island (77), languages for international professions (92); foreign language programs for journalism and communication majors (201) and the LSP program at Warley College, Smethwick, Great Britain (35).

The place of LSP in the foreign language curriculum has been the subject of considerable discussion since 1974. In the literature, LSP assumes the following curricular roles: 1) an innovative area within a department of Romance Languages (126); 2) a player in the changing role of the university language department (45); 3) an

alternative for upper level language courses (117); 4) a model of how business German can be used for constructive change in the foreign language curriculum (20); 5) a way to expand foreign language offerings (26; 71; 96; 158); and 6) a major part of the foreign language curriculum of the future (57; 204). Various works examine other curricular issues such as course objectives, content and tasks for LSP (67; 179), a design for basic language programs for special needs plus general proficiency (91), the opposition of some faculty members to the inclusion of LSP in the traditional foreign language course offerings (76), approaches to marketing business Spanish (86), and ways to design effective language training for professionals (206).

Needs assessment is an area of central importance for LSP since by definition LSP courses are designed around the specific language needs of the learner. Publications focus primarily on the language needs of the workplace (132; 135-36; 211), US-based corporations,[3] and UK-based corporations (155). Studies by Fuller, Clifford and Fisher investigate the language needs of the US government. The demand for foreign language

proficiency for national security is the subject of Hoegl's work. Others assess the language use and interests of professional school students (39; 124; 182) and the nontraditional language student (114).

The relationship of foreign language departments with professional schools or the private sector is the subject of a number of studies whose primary focus is on interdisciplinary cooperation with business schools.[4] Grosse (84) examines the attitudes of foreign language and business faculty toward each other and their disciplines. Grandin (80; 81) describes a cooperative effort between foreign languages and engineering.

A number of publications cover the interaction between foreign languages and the private sector.[5] Tung reports on cross-cultural and language training in Japanese multinationals. International internships for business language programs are described by Paulsell (149) and Schaub (171).

In an effort to measure the presence of LSP in the higher education curriculum, several surveys were undertaken. Alvarez' directory of programs in functional French gives a very brief

description of courses in French for specific purposes at selected universities in South America, Europe, Africa and the Middle East. In 1982, Grosse's survey of Spanish for business at AACSB colleges and universities (89) gave a preliminary indication of the growth of the field. Her subsequent survey (87) of languages for business and the professions provided additional information about the extent to which LSP had become a part of the foreign language curriculum. Five years later, Grosse and Voght conducted a similar, more extensive survey of LSP at US colleges and universities. In addition, surveys on business German (22), commercial French (41) and LSP in the secondary school (88) added to the knowledge base on the nature and development of the field.

The Integration of Language and Culture. One of the areas receiving the least coverage in publications concerns the integration of language and culture in LSP. To illustrate cross-cultural conflict, Hampares cites examples of the treatment of US business in the Spanish American novel. A descriptive study by Tung provides insight into the cross-cultural training programs of eighteen

Japanese multinationals, while Inman (109) investigates cross-cultural and language training in US multinational corporations. Their findings pose an interesting contrast to the curriculum of university-based LSP programs. Others like Dugan (54), Gerulaitis, Paulsell (148), and Surles discuss ways to integrate cultural components in the business language classroom. Savoie describes a French culture course for non-language majors. Finally, Rippert-Davila offers excellent advice to the would-be academic consultant who wishes to provide cross-cultural training for business.

The Proficiency Movement. Several authors have investigated the relationship of LSP to the proficiency movement. For example, Buck and Hiple present a rationale for defining and measuring foreign language proficiency programs for business and discuss the potential of proficiency-based learning for applications in international business. At the high school level, Fryer (66) describes the use of proficiency-oriented business units. Others examine the popular Chamber of Commerce exams in French, German and Spanish in relationship to curricular content in LSP, and to the ACTFL oral interview.

For example, Bowling considered the format, content and scoring procedures for the "certificat pratique" oral exam of the French Chamber of Commerce. In business German, Lalande and Schweckendiek found that the Zertifikat Deutsch als Fremdsprache and the Oral Proficiency Interview correlated well with respect to the evaluation of speaking skills. Along similar lines, Cummins (42) compared the Paris Chamber of Commerce examinations with the ACTFL/ETS Proficiency Guidelines and recommended their use to assess the language ability of individuals in an international business setting. The legal aspects of the chamber of commerce proficiency exams are the subject of Tcachuk and Gragg's article, while Elling explored the use of the German business diploma for evaluative purposes.

Methods and Materials. A body of work investigates methods and materials for teaching LSP. Among the pedagogical papers are: a proposal for a new methodology for scientific and technical Russian courses (32), suggestions for teaching legal French (72), a computer-assisted approach to teaching business German (82), techniques for teaching business French (100) and business

Spanish (144), reading strategies for the business language class (169), and how to create a company for business German (47). The case study approach to teaching languages for business is treated by Paton, Dany, and Dany and Noe.

With respect to instructional materials, the literature includes studies on materials collection, selection and the role of authentic materials in LSP (166), evaluation of texts in business Spanish (85), authentic materials for business Spanish (205), the electronic language laboratory's place in international business courses (127), the value of video as a motivational tool and vehicle for situational practice in LSP programs in Sweden (187), and library resources for students of commercial French (58).

Discourse Analysis. European authors have dominated the research in discourse analysis in LSP with a concentration on scientific and legal texts. In one of many articles on the subject, Widdowson (208) formulated a description of the characteristics of scientific language. Garfield and Welljams-Dorof conducted a citation analysis of language use in international

scientific research using the data base of the institute for Scientific Information. Other work in this area examined the integration of forms of scientific discourse in French (17; 200) and legal discouse in French (6). With respect to interlanguage, Selinker and Douglas present the results of some empirical studies on LSP and interlanguage, while Cornu and Delahaye consider variability in interlanguage, comparing LSP and Non-LSP IL talk.

A RESEARCH AGENDA FOR LSP

As the thirst for course and program models is gradually quenched and the field of LSP in the US matures, research directions may take some interesting turns. Some areas that might be studied are comparative analyses of LSP and traditional foreign language courses; effects of LSP on proficiency development of foreign language majors and professional students; motivational and attitudinal studies of LSP learners; possibilities for interdisciplinary cooperation in LSP; experiments in authentic materials for LSP; technological innovation for LSP; development of partnerships of languages and the professions for educational advancement, community outreach and

fundraising; the training of LSP faculty; the level of content knowledge derirable for LSP instruction; the balance of language, content and culture instruction in LSP; faculty perceptions of and attitudes toward LSP; cultural needs and interests of LSP students; and linkages with and acknowledgment of work in English for Specific Purposes. The research agenda for LSP should continue to grow as more scholars devote their time, energy and interest to this "new" addition to the foreign language curriculum. [6]

NOTES

1. See 14; 16; 48; 116; 156-58; 176; and 178.

2. The French articles cover the following types of courses: French for Voice Majors (4), French for Business and Journalism at Notre Dame (122), French for Journalism (168; 202), Business French (15; 26; 30; 38; 52; 60; 61; 65; 140; 141; 198), Legal and Commercial French at Vanderbilt Law School (31), French for Immigrants (34), French for Tourism (12), Mathematical French (131), Scientific French (167), French for Canadian Diplomats (51), French for Field Work (184), French for Special Purposes at the University of Southampton (9), and a French culture course (170).

The German articles describe the following courses: Business German (77; 105; 112; 164; 176; 194), German for Engineering, Science and Technology (24; 79-81; 120; 165), German for Foreign Workers (11), German for Psychology Majors (5), German for Reading (13; 83), German for Travelers (199), and Theological German (97).

Design and implementation of the following Spanish courses are treated in the literature: Business Spanish (129; 138; 143; 159; 186; 197; 203), Spanish for Social Services (50; 150), Spanish for Health Care Personnel (130; 146), Legal and Business Spanish at Vanderbilt Law School (121), Commercial, Legal and Medical Spanish at Wright State University (25), and Spanish for Legal Assisting (59).

Several articles refer to course development in less taught languages: Japanese for Tourism (101; 115; 162), Russian for Business (118), Technical Russian (193), Business Italian (63), Business Portuguese (185), and Latin for Theology (134).

3. See 8; 37; 54; 62; 106-08; 137; 191-92.

4. See 46; 55; 70; 74; 111; 153; 171; 177; 180; 183.

5. See 27; 40; 53; 64; 78; 94; 104; 133.

6. This article is excerted from Christine Uber Grosse and Geoffrey M. Voght, "The Evolution of Languages for Specific Purposes in the United States." Modern Language Journal. 75 (1991):

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